

STATE OF NEBRASKA

Pete Ricketts
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Jim Macy
Director

Suite 400, The Atrium

1200 'N' Street

P.O. Box 98922

Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-8922

Phone (402) 471-2186

FAX (402) 471-2909

website: <http://deq.ne.gov>

DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below:

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded wholly or in part through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Upgrade to Radio-Read Water Meters
APPLICANT: Kearney, Nebraska
COUNTY: Buffalo
POPULATION: 30,787 (2010 Census)
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311607
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$1,500,000
DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$1,500,000

The City of Kearney has applied for funding, through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program jointly administered by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Department of Public Health (DHHS) and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), to furnish and install base stations, regional network interface and radio transmitters in upgrading to a Radio-Read Water Meter System. Kearney has a permit to operate a public water supply system under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179.

According to the Priority Ranking System this project is considered to be a low priority and was included on the Project Priority Planning List in the State Fiscal Year 2016 Intended Use Plan (IUP). The project can be funded in accordance with the IUPs listed bypass criteria as the bypass date of January 1, 2016 has passed. Based on supporting documentation on file with the NDEQ, this project was determined to be eligible for a DWSRF loan, and is categorically eligible for funding through the Green Project Reserve.

The City is eligible for a 20-year loan at an interest rate of 2.0 percent per the criteria listed in the IUP. In addition to principal and interest, an administrative fee of 1.0 percent of the loan balance will be assessed. The current residential water rate is \$7.90 per month, with a usage rate of \$1.41 per

every 100 cubic feet of water consumed. The projected annual DWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage) for the project is \$116,835. Based on a minimum 12,000 active service connections, monthly household rates may need to be raised eighty (80) cents per month to pay for the project.

The proposed project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference and the Department has determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared. The project as proposed is solely a replacement of existing water service meters. Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas as wetlands, prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat;
- There will be no new disturbance within the 100-year floodplain, as this project is an upgrade to existing infrastructure;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may not be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans;

The proposed project is determined by DHHS to help the public water system maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The project will help minimize operation costs for Kearney through less labor required to read water meters, and help the environment by reduction in vehicle usage. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by DHHS in April of 2014, wherein several deficiencies were noted, but all were addressed by May 12, 2014. Another survey to routinely confirm the City's compliance with the program's Technical, Financial and Managerial (TFM) requirements will be conducted in 2017. Also, their current Environmental Tracking Tool score is 0, well below the allowable 11 per issued U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

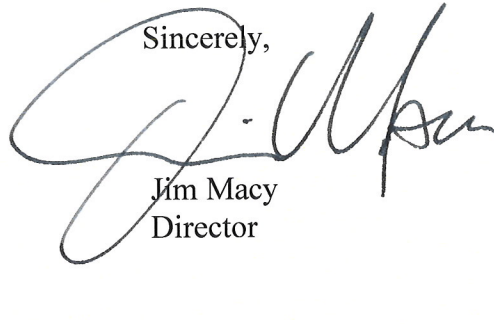
A Public Hearing was held October 27, 2015. A presentation of the proposed project was made by the Engineer to the City Council, including the project scope, costs, financing and schedule, with the City subsequently deciding to move forward with the proposed project.

The NDEQ shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, subsequent to the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local or tribal laws are being violated.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEQ. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to Steve McNulty, DHHS at (402) 471-1006 or email steve.mculty@nebraska.gov, or John Danforth, Water Division of NDEQ at (402) 471-3373 or email john.r.danforth@nebraska.gov.

Signed this 29th day of February 2016.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Macy".

Jim Macy
Director

Attachments: Distribution List
 Map

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DISTRIBUTION LIST
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Office of Public Affairs
P.O. Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES –
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Steve McNulty
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Mitch Paine
P.O. Box 94676
Lincoln, NE 68509-4676

NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS COMMISSION
Craig Wacker/Carey Grell
P.O. Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370

DIRECTOR, NEBRASKA STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68508-2554

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Heather Voorman
P.O. Box 94666
Lincoln, NE 68509

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Jeff Runge
9325 South Alda Road
Wood River, NE 68883

LOCAL NEWSPAPER (Public Information Only)
Kearney Hub
P.O. Box 1988
Kearney, NE 68848-1988

CONSULTING ENGINEER
Chris Miller, P.E.
Miller & Associates, Consulting Engineers, P.C.
1111 Central Avenue
Kearney, NE 68847

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Nick Chevance
Environmental Coordinator
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102-4226

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Ken Shaw
Room 308, Federal Building
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508

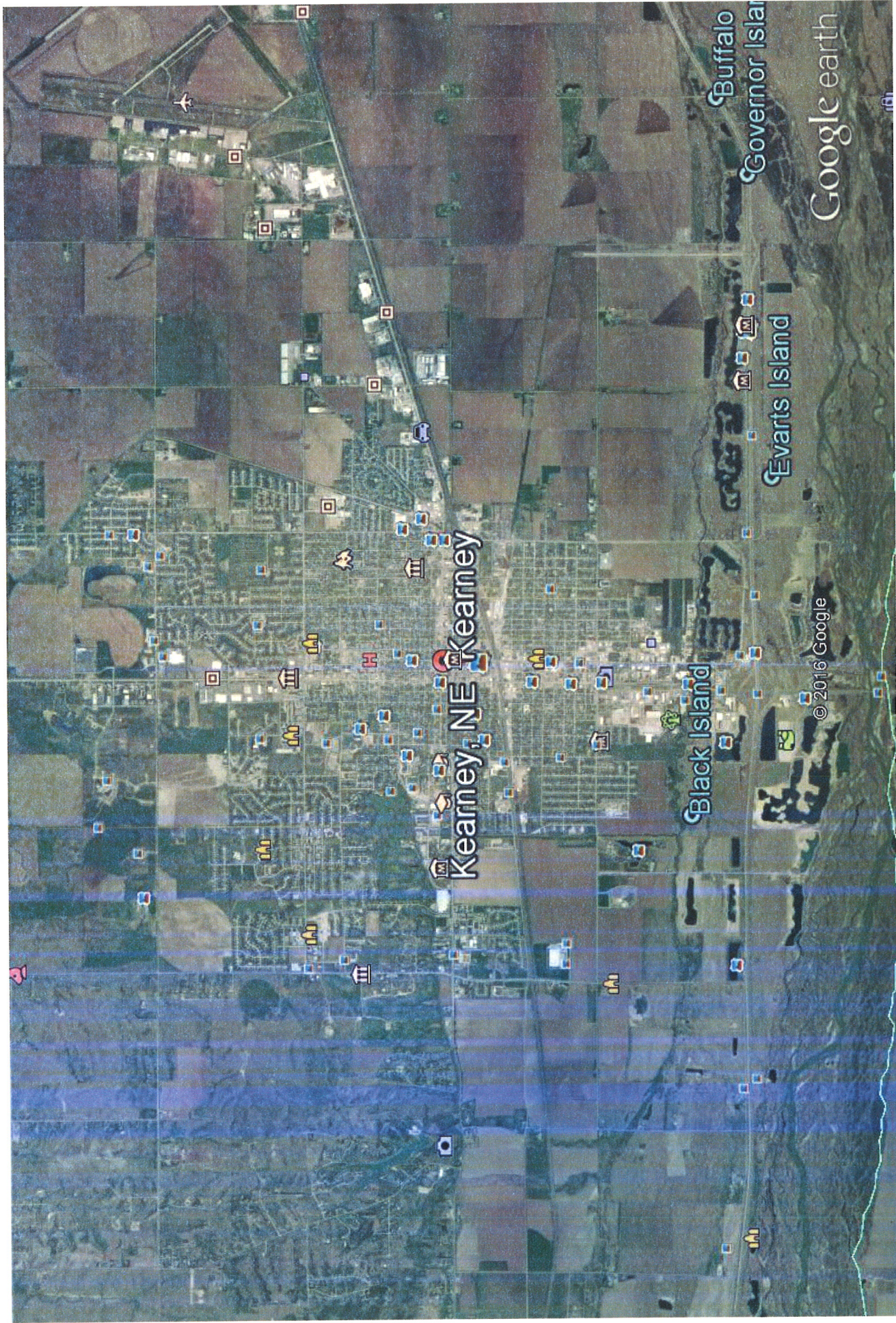
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
John Moeschen
State Program Manager
US Army corps of Engineers
Nebraska State Office, Suite 1
8901 South 154th Street
Omaha, NE 68138-3621

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Chris Simmons/Kelly Beard-Tittone
11201 Renner Blvd
Mail Code: WWPDWIMB
Lenexa, KS 66219

STATE CONSERVATIONIST
Soil Conservation Service
Federal Building, Room 345
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508

APPLICANT
Kirk Stocker, Director of Utilities
City of Kearney
18 East 22nd Street
Kearney, NE 68847

CENTRAL PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES
DISTRICT
215 North Kaufman Avenue
Grand Island, NE 68803



Google earth

miles
km

5 9

